

REMARKS

The present application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 2, 2008. Claims 1, 3, 5, 11, 13, 15, 21, and 22 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 11, 21, and 22 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

The Office Action states that Claims 1, 3, 5, 13, 15, 21, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0029474 (*Yada*) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0093521 (*Schlonski et al.*) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,711,154 (*O'Neal*). For at least the following reasons, Applicant submits that independent Claims 1, 11, 21, and 22, together with the claims dependent therefrom, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is directed to an information processing apparatus that manages a predetermined device for performing communication over a network. The information processing apparatus includes: (1) a holding unit configured to hold corresponding information corresponding to first device identification information and second device identification information; (2) an obtaining unit configured to obtain accounting information, which includes a number of sheets printed, based on an image forming operation from the predetermined device; (3) a determination unit configured to compare a combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined

device with the corresponding information held by the holding unit, and determine whether at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed; (4) a communication controlling unit configured to issue a notification to an external apparatus, when the determination unit determines that one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed and the other is not being managed, and not to issue a notification to the external apparatus when the determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses; and (5) an updating unit configured to update the corresponding information held by the holding unit in accordance with an update notification, for updating the combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information, from the external apparatus.

The notification issued by the communication controlling unit includes information indicating that either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed. The communication controlling unit restricts notifying the external apparatus of the accounting information obtained from the predetermined device by the obtaining unit if the determination unit determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed. The communication controlling unit removes the restriction and notifies

the external apparatus of the accounting information obtained by the obtaining unit when the corresponding information is updated by the updating unit. In addition, the first device identification information includes internet protocol address information and the second device identification information includes media access control (MAC) address information.

Notable features of Claim 1 are that the determination unit determines whether at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed, and that the communication controlling unit issues a notification to the external apparatus when the determination unit determines that one of first device identification information and second device identification information is being managed and the other is not being managed, and does not issue a notification to the external apparatus when the determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed. By virtue of these features, the external apparatus may be simplified and configured to receive notifications regarding managed devices only, because the information processing apparatus transmits notifications to the external apparatus only if the determination unit determines that the first or the second identification information is being managed. That is, the information processing apparatus does not transmit notifications to the external apparatus if the determination unit determines that neither the first nor the second identification information is being managed. Accordingly, the external apparatus receives notifications regarding devices (*e.g.*, printers) that are managed and does not receive notifications regarding devices (*e.g.*, workstations) that are not managed, for

example.¹

Yada relates to an asset management system in which information regarding assets is gathered by a software program (*see* paragraph 1). Apparently, asset management information is updated automatically and an administrator must manually update the asset management information only when an asset is purchased or removed from service (*see* paragraph 12). *Yada* discusses that, in Step S8-2, a communication log is analyzed and a determination is made whether a MAC address and an IP address are those of an asset being managed (*see* paragraph 62). If these addresses are not of an asset being managed, an alarm notification indicating that the asset should be registered is provided to an administrator, in Step S8-3 (*see* paragraph 62). In Step S8-4, a determination is made whether the addresses are of a particular host (*see* paragraph 63). If the addresses are not of the particular host, an alarm notification indicating that contents of a registration have been updated is provided to the administrator, in Step S8-6 (*see* paragraph 63). In Step S8-8, a determination is made whether a particular asset is a management target (*see* paragraph 64). If the particular asset is not the management target, an alarm notification indicating that contents of a registration have been updated is provided to the administrator, in Step S8-10 (*see* paragraph 64). In summary, the only time that an alarm notification is not transmitted is when the MAC address and the IP address are those of a management target (and other conditions that are tested in Steps S8-4, S8-8, and S8-11 are met). Accordingly,

^{1/} The example(s) presented herein are intended for illustrative purposes only. Any details presented in the illustrative example(s) should not be construed to limit the scope of the claims.

Yada fails to disclose a determination unit that determines “whether at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed,” and a communication controlling unit “that does not issue a notification to the external apparatus, when the determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed,” as recited in Claim 1. Moreover, *Yada* fails to teach or suggest that an alarm notification to the administrator is restricted, if it is determined that the MAC address and the IP address are not those of an asset being managed.

The Office Action states that “not sending a notification is merely a policy setup by an administrator according to a business rule” (*see* Office Action, page 4, lines 7-8). During the interview of January 13, 2009, the Examiner clarified this statement and stated that, because assets are managed in *Yada*, there must be a policy for each managed asset, which may specify that an alarm notification is not transmitted for devices, if neither a MAC address nor an IP address of those devices are being managed. *Yada*, however, is silent regarding setting up a policy according to a business rule. As best understood by Applicant, even if such a policy exists, the software tool disclosed by *Yada* could not implement that policy (*see* FIG. 8).

Schlonski et al. relates to an asset management system in which information about assets can be gathered and managed (*see* paragraph 2). The Office Action alleges that *Schlonski et al.* discloses the holding unit and the obtaining unit, which the Office Action concedes are not disclosed or suggested in *Yada*. Nothing has been found in

Schlonski et al., however, that is believed to cure the deficiencies of *Yada* identified above.

O'Neal relates to a notification system for alerting a user of received messages, regardless of what type of device generated the message (*see* col. 2, lines 29-32). The Office Action alleges that *O'Neal* discloses filtering messages based on distinguishing device types and user defined roles. Nothing has been found in *O'Neal* that is believed to cure the deficiencies of *Yada* and *Schlonski et al.* identified above.

Applicant submits that a combination of *Yada*, *Schlonski et al.*, and *O'Neal*, assuming such combination would even be permissible, would fail to teach or suggest an information processing apparatus that includes “a determination unit configured to compare a combination of the first device identification information and the second device identification information which are obtained from the predetermined device with the corresponding information held by the holding unit, and determine whether at least one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed” and “a communication controlling unit configured to issue a notification to an external apparatus when said determination unit determines that one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed and the other is not being managed, and not to issue a notification to the external apparatus when said determination unit determines that neither one of the first device identification information and the second device identification information is being managed, the external apparatus being capable of receiving the notification through a predetermined communications line and managing a plurality of information processing apparatuses,”

wherein the communication controlling unit “restricts notifying the external apparatus of the accounting information obtained from the predetermined device by said obtaining unit if said determination unit determines either the first device identification information or the second device identification information is not being managed, and removes the restriction and notifies the external apparatus of the accounting information obtained by said obtaining unit when the corresponding information is updated by said updating unit,” as recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is patentable over *Yada*, *Schlonski et al.*, and *O’Neal*, and respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Independent Claims 11, 21, and 22 include features similar to those of Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. The other rejected claims in the present application depend from one or another of Claims 1, 11, 21, and 22 discussed above, and therefore are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim also is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No petition to extend the time for response to the Office Action is deemed necessary for this Request. If, however, such a petition is required to make this Request timely filed, then this paper should be considered such a petition and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite petition fee to Deposit Account 06-1205.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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FCHS_WS 2881252v1